



Central-Northern New York Group

2024 Report of CNNY Group

The Central/Northern New York Group has had a very successful and extremely busy year. With a full complement of ExCom members (eleven), and with each member taking on a specific responsibility, we have been able to become a noted force in our region. We send out a newsletter by email approximately every other month, and by mail a newsletter plus a flyer for endorsements.

Major Issues we have been covering:

1. Electric School buses:

With New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) setting ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to electric school buses is a vital step toward meeting these goals.

Each year school districts ask for a vote on the school budget and include replacement of diesel buses generally after ten years of use. We were approached last year in May to be involved in the encouragement of local districts to include electric school bus options on the ballot. Since it was too late to change the ballots, we encouraged the district voters to vote down the initiative of diesel buses as a statement. We formed an extensive coalition of local groups as well as working with the Chapter Transportation Committee to address this issue early enough to be included in the budget vote. We also realized that districts need to understand that there are extensive incentives available to the districts to help cover any extra costs over diesel buses.

Our group and the other environmental partners requested Energy21 to run an informational meeting in person as well as with a zoom link, which we did.

Approximately 45 people came in person and almost 100 attended including online. About 12 school districts tuned in. Attached is our agenda flyer. The session was so successful that the Rochester Group has asked Energy21 and CNNY Group to hold a similar informational, which will be held on November 21st on zoom. An announcement will be sent out and the hope is that all groups will share the information with their members so that they can link in.

2. Large Scale Renewable Projects:

A committee of our group worked extensively to check out a proposed large scale solar project which will be built in Fenner, Madison County. The proposed land is mostly on property where there is already a wind farm. The committee was invited to take a road trip to see the area in question, as the developers are asking for our endorsement, similar to the endorsement given by the Buffalo group for a windfarm

in its area. Our discussion was primary on how many trees will be sacrificed and if they can be replaced elsewhere. Fortunately, there were no old growth trees. After working many hours with the developer, we submitted our findings to the Chapter Committee for approval. There are several other projects who are asking for our input, if we have the time and volunteers.

3. Micron:

Another issue which has taken up a great amount of time is dealing with Micron building a facility in Central New York. Micron is scheduled to receive upwards of \$20B in public subsidies and tax credits from federal, state, and local governments. With this historic investment, the CNY community has been promised thousands of good jobs created by the project, which will be a boon for the Syracuse area. Our group is involved in several coalitions and our role is to not only push for good and safe jobs, but also to make sure that the project will be as environmentally protective both in the construction as well as maintenance of the facility. Our concerns include wetlands, use of concrete, the inclusion of renewable energy in the planning phase, (the amount of energy required will be equivalent of the energy requirement for the states of Vermont and New Hampshire), transportation issues, and of utmost concern, the enormous use of water as well as containment of PFAS.

We are part of these coalitions:

*Sustainability Coalition of CNY(members of steering committee)

*Chips Community United

*Greening USA

*We have signed on to the Sustain CNY Good Jobs and Equitable Access platform!

4. Nuclear energy:

The group has been working to oppose NYSERDA's promotion of new, unproven, untested, and highly radioactive and expensive nuclear energy technologies. We are working with the Chapter to oppose the The Draft Blueprint for Consideration of so-called "Advanced" Nuclear by a state authority combined with a cursory and inaccurate analysis of the state of the nuclear industry.

5. Political Activism:

Our group have been very involved in endorsing candidates and working with campaigns. Because we not only required questionnaires and interviewed all candidates, we did not deal with local campaigns but focused on NYS Assembly and Senate, as well as Congress. Our group at present is represented by a Congressman who has an extremely poor environmental record. He is also anti labor, anti choice, climate change denier and avid Trump supporter. Our group is also involved with the National Presidential and Vice Presidential elections. (Our chair was a member of the DNC platform committee and was invited to and attended the convention in Chicago.) Submitted by: Rhea Jezer, Chair